

How to Maintain Your Weight Loss

Welcome back. My name is April and today we are going to be talking about how to maintain your weight loss. Losing weight is tough to do. So today we are going to talk about how to maintain your weight loss and some different steps that you can take so you don't gain the weight back.

Now one of the reasons people might gain weight back is that once you've met your weight goals, sometimes it is very easy to let some of your older habits slip back in. So, if you have been watching your calories very closely, which to lose weight you have to eat a diet low in calories, sometimes people say, well you know I have been doing so well and things are going well so I think that I can eat this. Then they notice that you know one time doing it leads to this time, that time and the calories start to slip back in. So, you don't want to let that happen. The thing to know about this is that this is not a diet, this is not something that you go on, it is not something that you go off. What we want you to do is make permanent lifestyle changes, so know that once you do meet your weight goals that you are going to have to continue to do the things that you did to lose weight to keep it off. One of the other reasons that people might regain their weight is the physical activity. Now physical activity, we are encouraging you to get up to the 30 minutes a day most days of the week as you are doing this program and it is very important that you slowly increase that while you are going through that program, but if somebody loses a significant amount of weight you actually need to increase your exercise to 60-90 minutes a day for the weight to stay off. So, when people say you know to keep my weight off I have to work twice as hard as other people, they are not lying. It is very important that you increase that physical activity, it is going to help keep your metabolism going. So, it is very important not to let that physical activity go off. Now sometimes people have a set back in their life, like a stressful situation or something that happens like I had a client who fell and broke their leg, so they couldn't exercise for a while. It is very tough to get back on track after something like that but the most important thing is to get back on track as soon as you can and to do the physical activity that you are able to do if you do have a limitation such as that.

So, what I would like to do now is actually get some tips from our Veterans who have lost a good amount of weight and who have kept it off, so let's see what they have to say about how to prevent weight regain:

I weigh every day, right after I take a shower in the morning, I weigh in and record it. I have gotten an old calendar. I will never put on 5 or 8 pounds and it will be a big surprise or something like that.

I guess for me, I would just get into a support group, whether it is an organized support group or let your family know what you are doing, encourage them to encourage you.

Keep charting the amount of food that you eat, it keeps me halfway in line as far as the amount of calorie intake that I have.

I think this program enables us to keep from the binges. The name of the game is to stay on course and when you get off course, get back on course, we are all going to get off course. So it's just a matter of staying focused.

The key word was lifestyle change and to me that you should have a sign lifestyle change. If you don't believe in that it is not going to work for you.

Here are the guidelines to keep in mind to help you prevent weight regain. As I mentioned before that physical activity is the number one thing you need to keep in mind to keep the weight off when you have lost a significant amount. So remember, 60-90 minutes most days of the week.

Now the next thing that you want to keep in mind is to maintain that calorie deficit. Make sure that you watch the calories and that you keep those in check and you don't start letting things slip back in.

Another important thing to remember is eating breakfast every morning. Eating breakfast, if you skip breakfast a lot of times you will be overly hungry later in the day, so when you start with breakfast this is going to help you keep on track for all those things.

You also want to keep up with your self monitoring, so from time to time you might want to do a food record, if you have stopped doing those for a while, just to make sure that you are staying on track.

You also want to continue to weigh weekly and the reason for this is if you don't weigh for a while and you have gained back you know 15 pounds, it is much more difficult to lose those again, it would be a lot easier if let's say you gain back 1-2 pounds if you get yourself back on track right away. So, we want you to catch slips right away so it is important that you continue to weigh yourself is a way to keep that weight off.

Now the consistent eating patterns are also important, so remember those three small meals and those two to three healthy snacks throughout the day are really going to help you keep that weight off.

Now, another thing that I want to tell you to expect is something called a weight loss plateau. A weight loss plateau is when you are losing weight, so for the first three to six months when you are losing weight, often you will see that your weight will go down quite quickly. After that it is very natural for your weight loss to slow as your body adjusts, it is trying to protect itself, so you need to expect those weight loss plateaus. Now these plateaus can be very frustrating because sometimes you are still really watching what you eat, you are exercising as you should and all of a sudden you are not losing weight anymore. So, this is a point when some people do get frustrated and give up. They feel like, well, I am not losing weight anymore so I might as well go back to what I was doing. Don't let that happen to you. Weight loss plateaus are to be expected, it is just a way for your body to protect itself. So, what you need to do when you hit that weight loss plateau is to focus back on your eating, make sure that maybe some calories haven't slipped back in and start doing your food records again.

One way to get through the plateau a little bit faster is to increase your exercise. Maybe you need to do an exercise that you haven't been doing. Like, for example, if you have been doing a lot of walking maybe you need to use some different muscle groups, try a different exercise for a while and make sure that you are including some strength training at least twice a week. That is going to help keep your muscle mass and keep your metabolism going. So, you might need to make a little change up with your physical activity, maybe your body isn't working any more because it has gotten so used to what you are doing. So, that can really help you move through those weight loss plateaus. But the most important thing to remember is not to get frustrated, keep up with the diet, keep up with the physical activity and your body is going to move through those weight loss plateaus.

One final thing to consider is that some people have an unrealistic weight goal in mind when they first start to lose weight. They want to lose large amounts of weight. Now if you want to lose a large amount of weight that is great. But the thing that is important to consider is research shows that 10% is very reasonable, over and above that it just depends on genetics and a lot of different things that you might not have control over. So, it is important not to get discouraged if you don't hit some magic number. All the different changes that you are making, eating more fruits and vegetables, cutting back on fat, watching your sugar intake, watching your sodium intake and eating healthier as well as the physical activity that you are doing, these are all going to have a lot of benefit. Now when people get started in the *MOVE!* program they often tell me this is what I want to get out of doing this, they say they want lower blood sugars or lower blood pressure or less pain in their knees and back, all these really good things that are important for health. Now all of these things you can get by eating healthier and by exercising more without looking at the scale, so I want you to know that all these things are worth it, even if the scale doesn't hit that magic number. So, don't get frustrated and just realize that everything that you are doing is worth the effort that you are putting in.

Now let's go to what some of the Veterans have to say about some of the benefits that they noticed from just making the diet and the physical activity changes.

I am amazed at how I feel.

I just feel so much better and I have a girlfriend, she is also trying to lose weight and we are both motivated to exercise. I get clothes out of the closet that I hadn't worn for a couple of three years that actually started fitting me now and that is a good feeling.

I just knew I had to do something, I was just so out of shape, couldn't breathe, couldn't like even tie my shoes, now I can get on the bathroom scale and look straight down and see a weight, I could never do that before.

We have all learned lifestyle changes and even though I hate to use the word diet because it is not a diet, you just pay more attention to what you are doing. I have had some of my relatives say boy, you are really starting to look pretty good and you know it makes you feel good. Have you lost some weight they said you are starting to look pretty good, you know?

As you can see there are many different benefits to making these changes so stick with it. Now the assignment for this week is make a plan. So, let's say that you notice that you are starting to gain weight again, I want you to have a plan in place that you are going to do. Some really good ideas as we talked about in this session are to go back to doing your food record, going back to a registered dietitian or your support person and making sure that you are getting back on track and don't forget to keep your weekly food record and your physical activity records to keep you on track

Congratulations on completing another week towards making your healthy lifestyle changes. I hope to see you next week.